



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3012198

Address: 524 Broadway

Applicant: Michael Willis for 550 Broadway LLC

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, June 15, 2011

Board Members Present: Evan Bourquard
Clint Keithley
Wolf Saar
Chip Wall

Board Member Absent: Dawn Bushnaq
Lisa Picard

DPD Staff Present: Bruce P. Rips

SITE & VICINITY

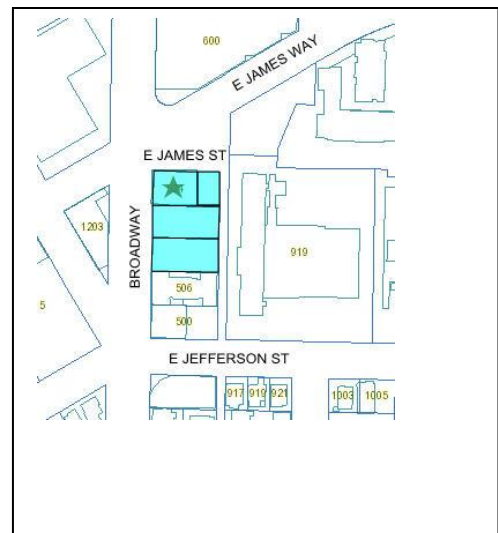
Site Zone: Neighborhood Commercial Three (NC3 85) with an 85' height limit.

Nearby Zones: North: NC3 85 along Broadway

South: NC3 85 and NC3 65 along Broadway. Further south of E. Jefferson the zoning changes to Midrise.

East: Midrise (MR). Seattle University's major institution overlay (MIO) has a 105' height limit.

West: NC3 85 across Broadway. The heights of Swedish Hospital's MIO district varies from 70 to 240 feet.



Lot Area:	The 21,684.83 sq. ft. site descends toward both the east and south. From the highest point near the intersection of Broadway and E. James St., the topography changes by approximately 14' (13%) along the north property line and roughly five to six feet (five percent) along Broadway.
Current Development:	A three-story mixed use building (two stories on Broadway) occupies the northwest corner of the development site. Surface parking covers most of the property to the east and south of the structure.
Access:	Two curb cuts connect to Broadway. The site also has access from the alley.
Surrounding Development & Neighborhood Character	Two institutions, Swedish Hospital and Seattle University, comprise the largest property ownership in the area. The hospital complex, related medical office buildings, classrooms and dormitories represent the vicinity's dominant development. The institutional buildings and newer office buildings (primarily medical related) dominate the landscape in height and breadth many of them full-block structures. Smaller residential and commercial buildings line portions of Broadway south of the site including the two buildings on the same block face as well as the apartment building across Broadway. Smaller grained development also occurs in the neighborhood beyond E. Jefferson St. to the south of Seattle University. Broadway marks a shift in the street grid. Several buildings conform to the wedge shape of their property. E. James Way continues the grid established on the west until it connects to E. Cherry St. The subject parcel lies to south of a wedge shaped portion of the right-of-way with considerable tree cover.
ECAs:	No Environmentally Critical Areas mapped on the site.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to develop a seven story mixed-use building with approximately 198 residential units, 6,500 square feet of commercial space along Broadway and E. James St. (including three live/work) and 107 enclosed parking spaces accessed from the alley. The proposal includes the demolition of a three story mixed use building.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The applicant presented three massing options. These ranged from a traditional courtyard scheme (option #1) rung by apartments units on four sides to an “L” shaped scheme with a smaller mass nestled in the void created by the larger volume (option # 2) to a third scheme partially resembling a “C” scheme with a court facing the east and a portion of the south elevation slight setback (15’) from the adjacent property. The schemes possess several commonalities. All would sit on a parking podium with garage access at the alley, commercial space would either anchor the northwest corner or lie situated along Broadway at street level and a setback above level two would overlook Broadway. The setback mimics the three level high podiums established by several of the larger office and institutional buildings due to setback requirements from power lines. All three of the schemes bring the bulk of the mass to E. James St. and Broadway leaving cut outs of open space on the east and south edges (options #2 and 3) or in a central courtyard (option #1). The third option distinguishes itself with the addition of live-work units facing E. James.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nine individuals affixed their names to the Early Design Review sign-in sheet. Those who spoke raised the following issues:

- Setback: Explore the potential impacts of the setback departure.
- Access: Remove the fence near James St.
- E. James St:
 - Live/work on James St. could potentially contribute to the pedestrian experience.
 - A nice outdoor space could be developed along the E. James streetscape.
- Materials: The choice of materials could lend itself to the pedestrian connection.
- Options: Favors Option #2. The “L” shape has a clean shape.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance. The Board identified the Citywide Design Guidelines & Neighborhood specific guidelines (as applicable) of highest priority for this project.

The Neighborhood specific guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

A. Site Planning

A-1 Responding to Site Characteristics. The siting of buildings should respond to specific site conditions and opportunities such as non-rectangular lots, location on prominent intersections, unusual topography, significant vegetation and views or other natural features.

A-2 Streetscape Compatibility. The siting of buildings should acknowledge and reinforce the existing desirable spatial characteristics of the right-of-way.

The relationship of the proposed structure to East James St. and Broadway sidewalks generally met with the Board's approval. E. James St. may provide opportunities not yet explored by the architect. The Board observed that the primary residential entry could occur there. Does it make sense to place open space along E. James St. that connects with the intimate scale of the narrow street and the treed area in the right of way? At the next EDG meeting, the applicant will need to show scenarios that consider these issues.

A-3 Entrances Visible from the Street. Entries should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street.

A-4 Human Activity. New development should be sited and designed to encourage human activity on the street.

As shown on all of the options, commercial uses along Broadway would likely encourage pedestrian activity. Positioning a courtyard along Broadway that serves both the residential entry and commercial use would also enhance street life. The Board noted that the proposal for the B & O Espresso site has this arrangement.

A-5 Respect for Adjacent Sites. Buildings should respect adjacent properties by being located on their sites to minimize disruption of the privacy and outdoor activities of residents in adjacent buildings.

The Board found the applicant's desire to connect the proposal with the Seattle University campus quite tenuous. Campion Residence Hall forms a substantial wall or barrier between the subject property and the campus open spaces. The exploration of other partis or design options should illuminate other reasons for a strong design concept.

A-6 Transition Between Residence and Street. For residential projects, the space between the building and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and encourage social interaction among residents and neighbors.

Placing the primary residential entry on E. James St. presents possibilities of shaping a delightful entry that connects with the intimacy of the right of way and the wooded wedge of land controlled by Seattle University.

A-7 Residential Open Space. Residential projects should be sited to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, well-integrated open space.

The Board finds the courtyard for Option #3 problematic. The benefits to the residents appear questionable as sunlight would never penetrate into the court (see shadow studies p. 19 of booklet). The court would sit at alley grade rather than at the level of Broadway and extend 70 feet to the roof. Only four units and an amenity space would have direct access to it. For Option # 3, the Board encouraged the applicant to enlarge the space and extend the width in an attempt to capture more light.

Shifting the courtyard to the Broadway side (The applicant should consider as another option.), the Board observed, would engage the residential entry and the commercial uses as well as provide more direct light. The Board encouraged the applicant to develop at least one other option as well.

The open space needs to be viable amenity for any of the schemes.

- A-8 Parking and Vehicle Access. Siting should minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties, and pedestrian safety.**

The Board agreed with the use of the alley for vehicular access.

- A-10 Corner Lots. Building on corner lots should be oriented to the corner and public street fronts. Parking and automobile access should be located away from corners.**

Due to its focus on the massing options, the Board did not discuss the treatment of the corner. This issue may arise at another Board meeting.

B. Height, Bulk and Scale

- B-1 Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility. Projects should be compatible with the scale of development anticipated by the applicable Land Use Policies for the surrounding area and should be sited and designed to provide a sensitive transition to near-by, less intensive zones. Projects on zone edges should be developed in a manner that creates a step in perceived height, bulk, and scale between anticipated development potential of the adjacent zones.**

Setting back the building at the upper levels along Broadway due to the power lines resonated with the Board members. Most of the newer structures along Broadway have a setback at or near their third floor. Older buildings along Broadway generally were built to a height of two to three floors.

The vertical notch as represented in Option #3 or a placement of open space along Broadway would potentially provide a break in the street wall that may relate to the size, proportion and rhythm of the structures along this important arterial.

C. Architectural Elements and Materials

- C-1 Architectural Context. New buildings proposed for existing neighborhoods with a well-defined and desirable character should be compatible with or complement the architectural character and siting pattern of neighboring buildings.**

The shift in the street grid (and the wedge created by James Way and E. James St.) combined with the diversity of building types and uses provides fecund opportunities for a variety of architectural solutions. See guidance A-5.

- C-2 Architectural Concept and Consistency. Building design elements, details and massing should create a well-proportioned and unified building form and exhibit an overall architectural concept. Buildings should exhibit form and features identifying the functions within the building. In general, the roofline or top of the structure should be clearly distinguished from its facade walls.**

Development of three viable options is required for the next EDG presentation. These must possess strong architectural concepts. These may include an option in which the courtyard fronts onto Broadway. Another option may be an “I” shaped scheme in which the open spaces are more evenly distributed across the site. The Board also asked for further refinement of Option # 3 that responds to the concerns that the Board noted in the other guidelines.

- C-3 Human Scale. The design of new buildings should incorporate architectural features, elements, and details to achieve a good human scale.**

Given the large scale of newer buildings along Broadway, the architect will need to consider how elements of the building, particularly at the two street levels, will possess a scale meaningful to the pedestrian.

- C-4 Exterior Finish Materials. Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.**

The Board will discuss finish materials at a later meeting.

- C-5 Structured Parking Entrances. The presence and appearance of garage entrances should be minimized so that they do not dominate the street frontage of a building.**

Placement of the garage entrance at the alley resonated with the Board members.

D. Pedestrian Environment

- D-1 Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances. Convenient and attractive access to the building's entry should be provided. To ensure comfort and security, paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lighted and entry areas should be protected from the weather. Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian-oriented open space should be considered.**

Board comments focused on the courtyard and the potential for open space and entrances along E. James. In option # 3, the courtyard appeared to a leftover or minor space. Without penetration of sunlight in the courtyard, the Board doubts the viability of a courtyard facing Campion Hall. Possibilities include raising the courtyard, changing the size and dimensions and moving it to another location.

The Board wondered why option #1 wasn't viable at seven stories (one floor less than shown) as it would have roughly the same number of units as option #3.

Future drawings of the courtyard and other significant open spaces should read as three dimensional spaces.

- D-2 Blank Walls. Buildings should avoid large blank walls facing the street, especially near sidewalks. Where blank walls are unavoidable they should receive design treatment to increase pedestrian comfort and interest.**

The choice of live/work along James St. would reduce the likelihood of blank walls produced by a parking garage.

- D-5 Visual Impacts of Parking Structures. The visibility of all at-grade parking structures or accessory parking garages should be minimized. The parking portion of a structure should be architecturally compatible with the rest of the structure and streetscape. Open parking spaces and carports should be screened from the street and adjacent properties.**

- D-6 Screening of Dumpsters, Utilities, and Service Areas. Building sites should locate service elements like trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment away from the street front where possible. When elements such as dumpsters, utility meters, mechanical units and service areas cannot be located away from the street front, they should be situated and screened from view and should not be located in the pedestrian right-of-way.**

At the EDG stage, this guideline was not discussed.

- D-7 Personal Safety and Security. Project design should consider opportunities for enhancing personal safety and security in the environment under review.**

- D-8 Treatment of Alleys. The design of alley entrances should enhance the pedestrian street front.**

As a single scheme eventually develops, the Board will review the design of the alley façade.

- D-9 Commercial Signage. Signs should add interest to the street front environment and should be appropriate for the scale and character desired in the area.**

Review of commercial signage will likely occur at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-10 Commercial Lighting.** Appropriate levels of lighting should be provided in order to promote visual interest and a sense of security for people in commercial districts during evening hours. Lighting may be provided by incorporation into the building façade, the underside of overhead weather protection, on and around street furniture, in merchandising display windows, in landscaped areas, and/or on signage.

Review of commercial lighting will occur at the Recommendation meeting.

- D-11 Commercial Transparency.** Commercial storefronts should be transparent, allowing for a direct visual connection between pedestrians on the sidewalk and the activities occurring on the interior of a building. Blank walls should be avoided.

- D-12 Residential Entries and Transitions.** For residential projects in commercial zones, the space between the residential entry and the sidewalk should provide security and privacy for residents and a visually interesting street front for pedestrians. Residential buildings should enhance the character of the streetscape with small gardens, stoops and other elements that work to create a transition between the public sidewalk and private entry.

See guidance A-2, A-6, A-7 and E-1.

E. Landscaping

- E-1 Landscaping to Reinforce Design Continuity with Adjacent Sites.** Where possible, and where there is not another overriding concern, landscaping should reinforce the character of neighboring properties and abutting streetscape.

The frontage along E. James St. provides an opportunity to use landscaping to enhance the sense of intimacy already established along this short street. Once the design moves forward, the Board may address particular concerns.

- E-2 Landscaping to Enhance the Building and/or Site.** Landscaping, including living plant material, special pavements, trellises, screen walls, planters, site furniture, and similar features should be appropriately incorporated into the design to enhance the project.

Resolution of the location of residential open space (A-7) is a prerequisite before the Board will discuss this guideline in detail.

- E-3 Landscape Design to Address Special Site Conditions.** The landscape design should take advantage of special on-site conditions such as high-bank front yards, steep slopes, view corridors, or existing significant trees and off-site conditions such as greenbelts, ravines, natural areas, and boulevards.

The applicant indicated that the Seattle Department of Transportation recommends the preservation of a tree in the right-of-way near E. James St. and the alley.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

At the time of the Early Design Guidance meeting, the applicant preliminarily proposed a rear setback departure (SMC 23.47A.014B.3) based on the fact that Seattle University dormitory Campion Hall sitting behind the subject site is a tower in a major institution overlay and not a single family residence. The Board indicated its willingness to entertain the departure but requires development of additional massing options and refinement of Option # 3. Any Board recommendation will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet the design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). How the proposed design addresses other setbacks in response to conditions of the site and its neighbors will be a Board consideration. The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Recommendation meeting.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EDG meeting, the Board advised the applicant that the project should return for a second EDG meeting. The applicant will need to provide three viable and comparable options that address the guidance provided by the Board. The new options should have the same program and height. Option #3 can be refined based on the Board guidance.

Ripsb/doc/design review/EDG.3012198.docx